



**UGANDA**

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Permanent Mission of Uganda  
to the United Nations  
New York

Tel: (212) 949-0110  
Fax: (212) 687-4517

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**Statement By**

**H.E. Yoweri Museveni  
President of the Republic of Uganda**

**To the**

**High-Level Plenary Meeting  
Of the UN General Assembly**

New York  
16th September 2005

Mr. President,

I greet all of you on behalf of the people of Uganda. We salute this assembly for agreeing on the Millennium Development Goals in 2000. These were to:

- eradicate extreme poverty and hunger;
- achieve Universal Primary Education (UPE);
- promote gender equality and empower women;
- reduce child mortality rate;
- improve maternal health; "
- combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other diseases;
- ensure environmental sustainability; and
- develop a global partnership for development.

Without going into much rigmarole, I would like to make some pertinent observations regarding the achievement of these goals.

- o Firstly, these are good minimum targets for the human race;
- o Secondly, Uganda will not only achieve these goals but will surpass them - a factor highlighted by our achieving a rating of 0.508 out of 1, terrorism in Northern Uganda and other forms of interference notwithstanding, and
- o Thirdly, I suggest a more correct prioritization in a strategy to achieve these goals.

First, these are, obviously, good minimum development and social goals. Following the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War and the emergence of the Welfare state in the Western countries, the societies in North America, Western Europe and Japan have attained and surpassed those goals. Some of the formerly colonized Asian Countries have also achieved them. The challenge is to spread the achievement of those goals to the rest of the world. Hence, the decisions of the 2000 Millennium Summit.

Secondly, Uganda will achieve these goals. In fact our target of poverty eradication is not 28% by 2015 but 10% by 2017. In spite of the vicious terrorism campaign orchestrated against us by some of our neighbours for much of the 1990s as well as the mistake of under-spending on defence, Uganda's rating is now 0.508 out of 1. We have just entered the medium performing group having graduated from the Low Human Development Index (HIM) group of Countries. We have performed beyond the targets in the following areas:

- > provision of safe drinking water;
- > primary school enrolment;
- > HIV/AIDS;
- > reducing poverty levels from 56% (1992) to 34% (2000)

Our performance in Infant Mortality and Maternal Mortality has not been good. Had it not been for terrorism in Northern Uganda as well as lawlessness in Karamoja, our performance would have been much, much better.

One of the factors that caused the perpetuation of these two problems was, *as* stated above, the under-spending on defence. This was a subject of much debate with our Development Partners. Fortunately, this debate is now closed. Uganda will spend as much as the situation of terrorists and other criminals demands. This distortion will never re-occur.

On account of the ending of equivocation on this vital strategic matter, our all round performance on the MDGs will dramatically improve, much beyond our current positive ranking mentioned above.

Thirdly, we have to prioritize the elements that are needed to achieve these goals clearly and unequivocally. In the Bible it is written: "*Seek ye first the Kingdom of heaven and the rest will be added unto you*" (Matthew 6:33). My recommendation is that we first seek human resource development (*education and health for all*), value addition to our raw-materials that have been stolen for centuries, expand trade-related infrastructure and increase market access to the internal, regional and international markets; and the rest will be added unto us. In other words, we need to empower each country, at the earliest opportunity, to be able to endogenously generate resources that will fuel the sustainable implementation of the MDGs in each Country.

How will external aid sustainably fuel this implementation given the complications and possible distortions that are concomitant to the aid relationships? Aid-led vision has never worked. Vision-led aid can work; but such aid is not always available. Mr. Mc Namara (*former President of World Bank in 1960s*) told me how glad he is now that the South Koreans ignored his advice. He was opposing their plans of building an integrated steel industry, etc.

In Uganda most of our success stories have been attained in the face of opposition, indifference or distracting, superficial heckling by quite a number of our external partners. I can quote the examples of the export of flowers, fish processing, the dairy industry's processing capacity, the revival of our textile industry and, even, the HIV/AIDS campaign. Some external advisers have argued that Uganda is better off by allowing second-hand clothes from outside to suffocate our resurgent textile industry!! Incredible but true. Where aid is available, it should not be accompanied by excessive meddling by the aid providers.

Moreover, we should not forget that a country like Uganda gives more aid to the Countries of the North by selling to them cheap unprocessed raw-materials and has done so for the last 100 years. I have repeatedly told you that in each kilogramme of coffee Uganda gives, at least, US\$ 9 to the countries of the North in the form of aid; this is, in addition, to the aid in jobs that are thus exported.

Besides, the under-developed countries must know that their future is their responsibility primarily, if not solely. We need to eliminate all endogenous bottlenecks to our growth and transformation. We need to resolve the issue of, for instance, the political

balkanization of Africa in order to have a credible voice in World affairs on top of the endless supplications for aid from the former colonial countries. We need to integrate our markets regionally,

We need to combat terrorism, violation of human rights and corruption, not in quest of pleasing any gallery but for the sake of our convictions and our destiny. We need to reduce the cost of doing business in our countries in order to industrialize our economies by attracting and retaining investors.

While certain global initiatives are good (UPC; Global Fund for HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis; Debt Cancellation; etc), nothing will substitute each respective country's capacity to generate their own resources to sustainably implement the Millennium Development *Goals*. The scale of money needed to transform the Third World is not realizable from the so-called donors. Where they provide the aid, the interference becomes excessive and, therefore, disorienting and distorting in most cases.

In one of our dialects they have a proverb, which goes like this: *"Omuggo oguli kumuliracmo tegugoba ngo"*, meaning "A stick in the neighbouring house cannot save you from a leopard attack". Another proverb in another of our dialects goes like this: *"Entsinda ya keyeeri tekuzibira kugwejegyera"*, meaning that "The groaning of a sick man in a neighbouring house only disturbs the occupants of that very house but not the neighbours who sleep soundly unaware of the problems of the patient in the neighbouring house."

This achievement and the surpassing of the MDGs are consequences of generating enough wealth through primary production and processing so as to generate enough resources to support the process.

*"Enkubito eruga omwibega"* meaning "The strength of the blow somebody strikes you with is dependent on the strength of the shoulder muscles of the one that delivers the blow.

The U.N.D.P. Human Development Report, 2005, touches on this great angle to the problem. On page 113 of this year's report, it says the following:

*"Trade is at the heart of the interdependence that binds countries together. That interdependence has contributed to some highly visible human development advances, enabling millions of people to escape poverty, and share in the prosperity generated by globalization. Yet, many millions more have been left behind"*

On Page 117 in the same report it says:

*"Sub-Saharan Africa graphically demonstrates how losses from trade can out-weigh the benefits associated with aid and debt relief. If Africa enjoyed the same share of the world exports today as it did in 1980, its exports today would be some US\$ 119 billion higher (in constant 2000 Dollars). That is equivalent to about 5 times aid flows and budget earnings from debt service relief provided by high-income countries in 2002."*

To sustainably deal with the issue of implementing and surpassing the MDGs, we must create employment for Ugandans who mostly, taking advantage of Uganda's abundant agricultural land, engage in disguised unemployment in the villages doing little remunerative work. They mainly engage in subsistence farming – only producing for the stomach – (*Okukolera olubuto kyokka*). Our Ministry of Finance's document for July 2005, entitled 'Millennium Development Goals: Uganda's Prospects of achieving them', says the following on Page 29:

*"Open unemployment is relatively rare and is found mainly in urban areas, particularly among the most highly educated and amongst women. Underemployment (working on economic activities less than 40 hours a week) is wide-spread, affecting 65% of adults, including 75% of women and 55% of men".*

This is unavoidable, as long as Uganda's economic structure is still a raw-materials' production and subsistence farming oriented one.

Here below, is a table comparing the structure of employment in United Kingdom and Uganda as follows:

Sector		Uganda"
Agriculture	1.5%	82%
Industry	19.1%	5%
Services	79.5%	13%

How shall we sustainably implement the MDGs without creating employment for our people but only depending on OECD (rich countries) spending 0.7% of their GDP on aid? How will the spending of the OECD countries of 0.7% of GDP on aid create employment for 65% of Ugandans that are currently engaged in disguised underemployment? How will this dispensing of aid this time be different from the practice with the cold war client states of Africa of the 1960s and 1970s? Those client

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CIA -- The World Fact Book - (2004)

<sup>2</sup> CIA — The World Fact Book (1999)

states of the respective cold war camps *received a lot of aid*. The aid, nevertheless, never led to any development and let alone transformation of economy and society.

**This is where the sustainable implementation of MDGs without structural transformation is unsustainable. This backward economic structure of the Third World must change. Moreover, where it changes, everybody benefits. Look at China. The transformation of China from an agrarian economy to, increasingly, an industrial one has not only meant prosperity for China but also for the raw materials' producers such as Uganda.**

**Commodity prices for steel, copper, cement, petroleum, etc., have all gone up on account of the changes taking place in China. The millions of Chinese that demand better houses, cars, TV sets, etc, create a bigger market for our raw materials that were previously treated with disdain by an overfed and profligate little aristocracy of the world residing in Western Europe, North America and Japan. Uganda is now able to competitively produce steel because of this Chinese phenomenon. India is, similarly, being transformed. What would happen if Black Africa were to take the same route of rapid transformation from the doldrums of the agricultural economies to the vibrant world of industry and modernized services?**

**Under Para 56(m) of the of the outcome document, we have reaffirmed our commitment to environmental sustainability. The rate of urbanization in Africa is very rapid and has taken most of us by surprise. We now recognize not only the urgent need to upgrade slums but also to prevent the growth of new ones. Uganda would be pleased and stands ready to be part of an international effort in follow up and implementation of this important decision to strengthen the United Nations Habitat and human settlements Foundation and its slum upgrading facility.**

**In my opinion, this is where the key to globally, sustainably and profitably implement the MDGs lies.**

**Seek ye first Human Resource Development (*education and health for all*), Value Addition, Expanded Trade-related infrastructure and the rest shall be added unto you.**

**I thank you.**

**16 September 2005  
New York USA**